

NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS INVENTORY & MONITORING NETWORK

CHARTER **for the** **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** **and** **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Note: This charter supersedes the decision-making process described in the
Northern Great Plains Network Inventory Study Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Great Plains Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Network, hereafter referred to as the Network, is comprised of 13 National Park Service (NPS) units within North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming. The park units in the Network are:

Agate Fossil Beds
Badlands
Devils Tower
Fort Laramie
Fort Union Trading Post
Jewel Cave
Knife River Indian Villages
Missouri River
Mount Rushmore
Niobrara River
Scotts Bluff
Theodore Roosevelt
Wind Cave

This Charter documents and describes the purpose, structure, administration, and functions of the Network. The signatories to this Charter commit to the terms and agreements set forth herein.

The purpose of the Network is to collaboratively develop and conduct scientifically credible biological inventories and long-term ecological monitoring of park “vital signs.” To achieve this goal, the Network will establish and oversee a Network I&M Program. The I&M Program is a base-funded program that will serve all 13 parks in the Network. A Network I&M Coordinator will be assigned to oversee the daily operations of the I&M Program. The I&M Program, including all staff, equipment, and other resources, is the tool by which the Network will conduct “vital signs” monitoring. The I&M Program is viewed as a shared resource and responsibility among all 13 parks in the Network; and, therefore, all 13 parks are co-owners in the program. The I&M Program is intended to complement current park inventory and monitoring efforts. The

I&M Program will not replace or compete against current park efforts, nor will program initiatives negatively impact or cause a loss of current park-based funding for natural resource programs.

Each park in the Network will collaborate with the I&M Program in the development and implementation of “vital signs” monitoring. For example, the parks will assess their programs, their knowledge base of natural resources and information needs, the stressors on the health of their ecosystems, the administrative and legal factors related to inventory and monitoring issues that affect park management, and other issues and conditions related to natural resources. It is anticipated that some of the selected “vital signs” will be consistent across all park units, whereas others will be unique to individual parks or groups of parks. For purposes of Network coordination and collaboration and for overseeing the I&M Program, the Network will establish a Board of Directors (Board) and a Network Technical Committee (Technical Committee).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Network I&M Program will be led by a Board which represents the 13 Superintendents in the Network. The Board is an important means by which the Superintendents of the 13 parks will guide the I&M Program. Specifically, the Board:

- Develops and approves Network goals and objectives;
- Ensures the I&M Program provides useful information that is relevant to park management;
- Promotes effectiveness and fiscal responsibility within the I&M Program;
- Ensures the I&M Program adheres to NPS requirements and policy as well as applicable Federal and State laws;
- Identifies strategies for leveraging funds, partnerships, and personnel to best accomplish Network objectives;
- Serves as the final signatories on all documents and reports;
- Fosters an atmosphere of professionalism and cooperation.

Board Structure, Membership, and Rotation

The Board will consist of five members: three Superintendents from the Network, the Midwest Region I&M Coordinator, and the Network I&M Coordinator. Membership of the two Coordinator positions is permanent. Superintendent membership will be rotated annually with each member serving a 3-year term. Superintendent membership is assigned by park, not to a specific person. If a member leaves during their term, the acting and/or new Superintendent fills the Board position for the remainder of that park’s term. In the final year of the term, the Board member will act as Chair. Rotation of members will occur on October 1 of each year (with the first rotation occurring on October 1, 2004). For example, on October 1 of 2004, the term of the Superintendent of Badlands will expire, the Superintendent of Agate Fossil Beds will become Chair, and the Superintendent of Wind Cave will join the Board. The original structure of the Board and the rotation (from top to bottom) of new members is as follows:

<u>Park</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Size</u>
Badlands *	Central	Large
Agate Fossil Beds *	Southern	Small
Fort Union Trading Post *	Northern	Small
Wind Cave	Central	Large
Niobrara River	Southern	Large
Knife River Indian Villages	Northern	Small
Jewel Cave	Central	Small
Missouri River	Southern	Large
Devils Tower	Northern	Small
Mount Rushmore	Central	Small
Scotts Bluff	Southern	Small
Theodore Roosevelt	Northern	Large
Fort Laramie	Southern	Small

* Initial Board member

This structure allows for an equitable representation of large and small parks and parks from differing geographic regions. Any member who cannot attend or otherwise participate in a meeting of the Board may assign an acting member. However, another Board member present can not serve as the alternate or carry the proxy for an absent member.

Board Procedures and Roles

The Board will meet at least once annually but potentially more frequently during the initial planning phase of “vital signs” monitoring (FYs 2003 through 2006). Meetings will normally be scheduled shortly after the meetings of the Technical Committee. This allows the Board to quickly review the results and recommendations of the Technical Committee. Formal Board meetings will be announced at least 1 month in advance. A written agenda will be distributed at least 2 weeks before the meeting. All Superintendents in the Network and all Technical Committee members will be notified of the time, place, and agenda for all Board meetings. Superintendents not currently serving on the Board may attend any meeting.

It is anticipated that most Board decisions and recommendations will be reached through consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by a simple majority vote of the three Superintendents on the Board. All three Board members (or their alternates) must be present for decisions to be made. All Board discussions and decisions will be documented by a recorder, distributed for review, and, pending approval by the Board, adopted as official minutes.

The Midwest Region (MWR) I&M Coordinator and the Network I&M Coordinator will serve as non-voting members whose primary role is to provide accurate and current information and advice to the Superintendents on the Board. The Network I&M Coordinator will also serve as a liaison between the Technical Committee and the Board; will assist the Chair with coordinating, administering, and facilitating Board meetings; and will maintain Board records.

The I&M Program will pay travel costs for Board members to attend meetings (but such travel costs will be prorated if the meeting is held jointly with a non-Network meeting). Conference

calls or on-line conferencing may be used in lieu of face-to-face meetings if jointly determined to be useful and prudent.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Technical Committee represents the natural resource programs of the 13 parks. The Technical Committee serves as the scientific and operational body of the Network. Specifically, the Technical Committee is responsible for:

- Compiling and summarizing existing information about park resources;
- Recommending which resources should be monitored at the parks;
- Recommending what monitoring efforts by other agencies and non-governmental organizations should be tracked by the Network;
- Recommending the scientific protocols, procedures, and frequencies for collecting data;
- Recommending personnel and funding priorities for the I&M Program;
- Participating in the preparation and review of Annual Work Plan (AWP) and Annual Report (AR).
- Participating in the preparation of 5-Year Program Reviews.

Membership and Structure

The Technical Committee is comprised of one natural resource manager (or someone who serves in that capacity) from each park (to be designated by the Superintendent) as well as the Regional and Network I&M Coordinators. Membership is by the park, not the person, i.e., if a member moves to a new park the Superintendent from the park that he/she left will assign a new member to represent the park. The 15 members of the Technical Committee will solicit and utilize outside expertise when needed to help with technical decisions, peer-review, and information transfer. The Network I&M Coordinator chairs the Technical Committee and serves as the lead in preparing, completing, and submitting all documents and reports.

Procedures

The Technical Committee will meet at least once annually. During the initial planning phase (FYs 2003 through 2006) the committee may meet more regularly. Formal meetings will require a written agenda distributed at least 2 weeks before the meeting. Any member who cannot attend or otherwise participate in a meeting may assign an alternate. The Board will be notified of the time, place, and agenda of Technical Committee meetings and such meetings will be open to all Network Superintendents.

Travel for Technical Committee members will be paid by the I&M Program, but such travel costs will be prorated if the meeting is held jointly with a non-Network meeting. Conference calls or on-line conferencing may be used in lieu of face-to-face meetings if jointly determined to be useful and prudent.

Technical Committee decisions and recommendations will normally be reached through consensus. If necessary, issues will be resolved by a vote carried by a simple majority with at

least seven members (including alternates) needed for a quorum. Another committee member can not serve as the alternate for an absent member or carry the proxy for the absent member. The Regional and Network I&M Coordinators are non-voting members of the Technical Committee. All Technical Committee discussions and recommendations will be documented by a recorder and distributed for review prior to adoption as official minutes. The Network I&M Coordinator will maintain the files, track deadlines, and ensure recommendations are brought forward to the Board in a timely manner.

The Technical Committee can form other sub-committees or working groups to accomplish specific tasks and to get critical review as deemed necessary. For example, an I&M advisory group, comprised of scientists and other subject-matter experts from both within and outside the NPS, could be formed to provide advice to the Technical Committee.

NETWORK ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Supervision and Leadership

The Network I&M Coordinator receives technical supervision from the Regional I&M Coordinator and administrative supervision from the Superintendent of the host park. The host park superintendent will solicit comments from each of the Network Superintendents and the Regional I&M Coordinator prior to the annual performance appraisal. The Chair of the Board, along with assistance from other Board members, and the host park Superintendent is responsible for recruiting and hiring a Network I&M Coordinator. All Board members are expected to contribute to the Network I&M Coordinator's performance plan and review.

The Network I&M Coordinator directly supervises all I&M Program staff. The Network I&M Coordinator is responsible for hiring needed positions, developing performance plans, conducting performance reviews, approving travel and other administrative documents, and conducting all other activities typically associated with supervisory positions. All of these personnel actions will be done in coordination with the Board and Technical Committee.

Funding

The Network has been assigned cost code 2107 for purposes of funding the I&M Program. Funds will be transferred to this account from WASO through the MWR Office. Discrete Primary Work Element (PWE) codes will be used to track projects and other expenditures as appropriate. Funds contributed by parks and other NPS programs to the I&M Program will be tracked using discrete cost codes. All funds will be managed by the Network I&M Coordinator under the oversight of the Board. Funds will be used solely for purposes of operating the I&M Program in a way consistent with NPS policies, rules, and regulations. Available I&M program funds will be distributed to Network projects, parks, and offices as directed through the AWP and all I&M program funds must be strictly accounted for using a discrete PWE code and disclosed in the AR.

Administrative Costs and Support

Many of the parks in the Network have a successful history of sharing administrative functions. For example, many of the parks in the Network are part of the existing NEKOTA group which shares contracting, personnel, and computer support. The I&M Program will utilize these administrative resources. Specifically, the I&M Program will either transfer dollars to the parks hosting these functions at a rate not to exceed 5 percent of the total funding provided to the Network for inventories or park “vital signs” monitoring.

Planning and Report Documents

A series of planning and reporting documents are required by the Washington Office (WASO) of the NPS. The Network will develop and approve these documents with the Network I&M Coordinator taking a lead role. Relevant documents follow:

“Vital Signs” Monitoring Plan: A monitoring plan that summarizes the issues facing each park, the “vital signs” to be monitored, and how they will be monitored shall be prepared by the Technical Committee and approved by the Board. The plan will be implemented in a phased approach as specified by WASO. Phase 1 of the plan describes the formation of the Board and Technical Committee, the parks ecosystems and resources, and the goals and objectives for the monitoring program. This report is due to WASO on September 30, 2004. Phase 2 of the plan will update and expand upon Phase 1 and will also include the results of scoping workshops and an initial prioritization of potential “vital signs.” The Phase 2 report is due to WASO on September 30, 2005. The approved Phase 2 report will satisfy the requirements for meeting Performance Management Goal 1b3 “Vital Signs” for all parks in the Network. Phase 3 is essentially the completed monitoring plan. It involves more detailed design work and may include a revision of priorities for “vital signs” monitoring to fit within I&M Program budgets and to make efficient use of personnel. This final plan will be submitted to WASO no later than December 15, 2006.

Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan: Network will submit an Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan (AARWP) to WASO I&M and Water Resources Programs through the Regional I&M Coordinator. The AARWP is a single report composed of two sections that summarizes (1) accomplishments and an accounting of funds spent during the previous year, and (2) scheduled activities and budget allocations for the coming year. Both the Annual Administrative Report and Draft Work Plan must be approved by the Network Board, the Regional I&M Coordinator, and the Regional Directorate and submitted in early November each year. A final FY 2003 Work Plan will be submitted no later than January 31 each year, following approval by the Network Board and review by the Regional I&M Coordinator.

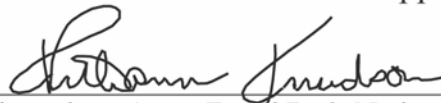
Five-Year Program Review: Beginning at the end of fiscal year 2008, and every 5 years thereafter, the Network will undertake a comprehensive program review. The review will be conducted by NPS national and regional I&M specialists as well as qualified specialists from other agencies and organizations. The purpose of this review is to evaluate accomplishments and products; protocols used for gathering data, data management, fiscal management; and staffing.

The review shall provide the principal basis for any significant changes in program direction, including amendments to the Charter and “Vital Signs” Monitoring Plan.

Amendments to this Charter

Any Network Superintendent may propose amendments to this Charter at any time. Providing the Board agrees to the proposed changes, all 13 Superintendents will be provided a 30-day comment period to review the proposed amendment. All 13 Superintendents must approve and sign any amendments to this Charter.

Approval Signatures


Superintendent, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

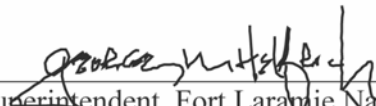
2/26/03
Date


Acting Superintendent, Badlands National Park

3/24/03
Date


Superintendent, Devils Tower National Monument

4-11-03
Date


Superintendent, Fort Laramie National Historic Site

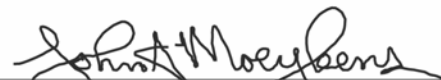
April 02, 2003
Date


Superintendent, Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

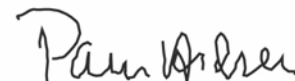
March 26, 2003
Date


Superintendent, Jewel Cave National Monument

3-28-03
Date


Acting Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site

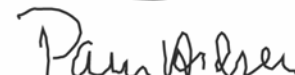
04-18-03
Date


Superintendent, Missouri National Recreational River


3.27.03
Date


Superintendent, Mount Rushmore National Memorial

3/31/03
Date


Superintendent, Niobrara National Scenic River


3.27.03
Date


Acting Superintendent, Scotts Bluff National Monument

3/27/03
Date


Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Park

4-2-03
Date


Superintendent, Wind Cave National Park

3/31/03
Date